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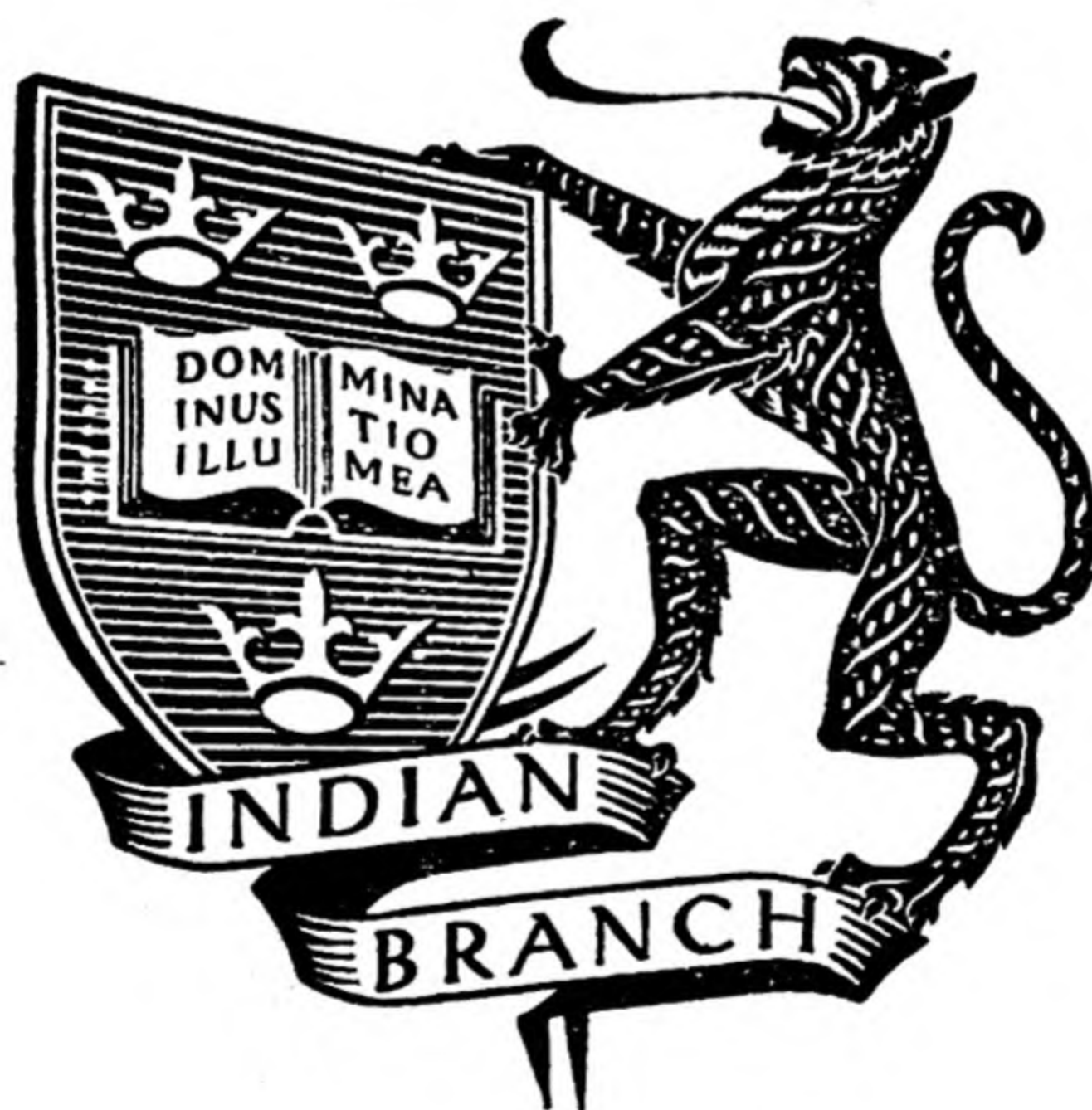
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GREAT WRITERS FOR YOUNG READERS

STORIES FROM TENNYSON



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT	7
DORA	15
SWEET AND LOW	22
THE PRINCESS	24
THE BROOK	43
THE FALCON	50
THE MAY QUEEN	57
THE DAY DREAM	65
THE FORESTERS	69
LADY CLARE	82
ECHOES	86
THE BEGGAR-MAID	88
THE LORD OF BURLEIGH	89
WHAT DOES LITTLE BIRDIE SAY ?	93

THE MARRIAGE OF GERAIN'T

THE Prince Geraint of Devon, a knight of Arthur's court, and of the Round Table, had one day ridden out a-hunting ; for a forester had brought tidings to the court of a gigantic milk-white hart first seen in the woods that morning. On his way he came upon Queen Guinevere and her waiting-maid, going late to the hunt ; and while he spoke with the Queen, there passed them three strange riders. A knight, a lady, and a dwarf went slowly by. The Queen, not knowing the haughty countenance of the knight, sent her maiden to enquire his name of the dwarf ; but the dwarf refused it insolently, and struck her in the face with his whip. Then Geraint rode up to the dwarf, who answered him as sharply, and cut him with his whip across the cheek ; and forthwith these unmannerly three made off at full speed.

8 THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

Prince Geraint was very wroth, and said, "This insult, noble Queen, shall be avenged. I will track these creatures to their lair. I have no arms nor armour, but I will borrow some ; and if I be not returned by the third day, you will know that I am fallen in fight."

"Farewell, fair Prince," answered the stately Queen, "and may you prosper in your quest, and in all things. And if you should love and wed a maiden, bring her first to me, and I will robe her like the sun for her wedding, be she a king's daughter or a beggar."

So Geraint tracked those three strangers by vales and downs, glades and woods, until at last he saw them enter a little town, where on one side stood a new white fortress, and on the other a castle nearly ruined. They rode into the fortress and disappeared. When Geraint arrived behind them in the town, he found it all in a hubbub ; some people were busy shoeing horses and others scouring armour. And whenever he asked of anyone, "What means this bustle and tumult ?"

he received but one gruff answer, "The Sparrowhawk! ough! the Sparrowhawk!" At last he grew angered, and cried to an old armourer who had given him the same answer, "If you are not Sparrowhawk-mad, like the rest, tell me where can I get lodging for the night, and arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy."

The armourer, surprised at this speech, and at this stranger knight so gay in purple silks, replied, "We hold a tournament here to-morrow; all the arms in the town are wanted. For lodging, I cannot tell you, except you may find it at Earl Yniol's, in the castle by the bridge."

So Geraint rode back to the ruined castle, and found an old Earl, who spoke to him most courteously, and offered him a night's shelter. "We were once rich," said he, "and are now poor, but our door stands open always." And he took the young knight, by crumbling archways and fallen stones, into a dark and cobwebbed hall. An ancient dame in worn brocades came

10 THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

forward to give him greeting, and beside her moved her daughter, Enid, all in faded silk. Geraint had never seen so fair and sweet a lady; and he thought in one moment, "Here, by God's grace, is the one maid for me!"

Then the old Earl Yniol bade Enid stable the good knight's horse and feed him. "And then go to the town," said he, "and buy meat and wine, and we will make us merry as we may."

Presently Geraint informed his host of the reason for which he had come, and asked, "Who is this Sparrowhawk? I take him for that discourteous knight who allowed his dwarf to insult the Queen. And tell me," said he, "where I can obtain arms to fight with him. I am Geraint of Devon."

Then Earl Yniol cried, "Are you indeed Geraint? Even here we have heard of your noble deeds. This Sparrowhawk, I grieve to say it, is my nephew. He and another suitor sought my daughter's hand; and when I refused her to either, this Sparrow-

THE MARRIAGE OF GERAIN'T 11

hawk raised all the town against me, sacked my castle the night before Enid's birthday, built that new fort to warn away my friends, and holds me almost a prisoner here in this ruinous place."

"Then give me arms," said Geraint, "that I may break his pride to-morrow in the tourney."

"You can have my old and rusty arms. Prince Geraint," replied his host; "but no man may fight in this tournament unless the lady he loves best be there."

Geraint leaned towards him eagerly, and said, "I will fight, by your leave, for this dear child of yours, the fairest maid that ever I saw; and if I win, I will make her my true wife."

The old Earl was greatly gladdened by these words, and he bade his wife go at once to Enid and find out whether she indeed had any liking for the Prince. But Enid was so amazed and startled that she answered her mother not a word.

The next day Geraint, in Yniol's old and

rusty armour, challenged the Sparrowhawk—who was the unknown discourteous knight; and after a long hard fight he overthrew him, and spared his life, on two conditions. First, that he should ride with the lady and the dwarf to Arthur's court, and there crave pardon for his insult to the Queen. Secondly, that he should restore to Yniol all that had been his.

But the next morning Enid woke and wondered how she should go, as the bride of Prince Geraint, to the Queen, who was so beautiful and stately; for she had nothing but her poor old faded silk to wear. And she thought of the lovely dress, all branched and flowered with gold, which her mother had given her that night before her birthday when the castle was sacked and burned, and which had been taken away like everything else that they had. And as Enid lay in bed, half dozing, and dreaming painful dreams of how she should be all ashamed in the presence of the King, she felt a hand upon her shoulder. It was her mother waking

her, and in her hand was that splendid dress all branched and flowered with gold. It had been restored to her ; it had never been worn, and was as fresh and rich as ever.

So the mother and daughter rejoiced that Enid could go dressed as an Earl's child should ; and she arose and slipped into the golden cloud of the dress, and looked more beautiful than ever. But when Geraint was told by Yniol how Enid was being adorned for the wedding, he answered, " Earl, entreat her by my love, that she ride with me in her faded silk ; although I give no reason but my wish." When Yniol took that hard message, poor Enid slipped off her shining broidered robe, and put on her shabby faded silk again, and so rode away with her lover. Yet the mother wrapped a mantle round her, to cover her poverty from the world.

But when Geraint and Enid came to the gates of Caerleon upon Usk Queen Guinevere was watching for them. And she welcomed the gentle Enid with friendship and all honour, and clothed her for her bridal like

14 THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

the sun, and made a rich marriage-feast, and a great rejoicing for her. So Enid became the wife of Prince Geraint ; but all her life she kept the gown of faded silk, remembering how he first had loved her in it.



DORA

WITH Farmer Allan, at the farm, lived his only son William and his niece Dora. And the old man greatly wished that these two should be man and wife ; for years he had set his heart upon it. So one day he called his son to him and said :

“ Dora is my brother’s daughter : she is pleasant to see, and wise beyond her age. I desire you to take her for your wife. I have thought of this marriage continually, night and day.”

But William answered shortly that he could not, and he would not, marry Dora.

Then his father, very wrathful, clenched his fists, and said to him “ Take a month to think about it. If you do not obey, I will certainly send you away ; you shall never darken my doors again.”

William was furious, and before the month was up he left home. He hired himself to

another farmer, and married a labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison. For the more he looked at Dora, the less he liked her. But Dora had always been extremely fond of him.

When William's wedding bells were ringing, Farmer Allan called his niece, and said, "If you should speak one word with him who was my son, or with his wife, I shall turn you out." And Dora, who was meek and quiet, said, "I will not." But she thought, "My uncle's mind will change; he cannot always keep up anger against William."

Time went on, however, and a child was born to William and Mary; then poverty and trouble came upon them, and William was almost heartbroken. He passed his father's gate every day, and the old man saw how ill he looked, yet he would not do a thing to help him. But Dora saved up what little money she could, and sent it secretly to her unhappy cousins, who never knew from whom it came. And at last, in harvest-time, William fell ill and died.

Then Dora went to Mary, where she sat weeping over her fatherless boy, and said, "It was all through me that this evil came on William ; let me try to make amends."



Mary, this is the finest harvest there has been for many years ; let me take the boy, and set him in my uncle's sight among the wheat. It may be that when his heart is glad because of the splendid harvest, it will be softened when he sees the child."

So Dora took the child and went her way

across the wheat, and sat upon a mound where poppies grew. She saw the farmer far off, but he did not come near her, and she dared not go to him. So that day nothing happened. But the next day she fetched the child again, and sat with him in the same place, and tied a little wreath of flowers about his hat. Then when the farmer came into the field, he spied her and came up, and asked her harshly, "Where were you yesterday? Whose child is that? What are you doing here?"

Dora answered softly, "This is William's child!"

"Did I not forbid you," said Allan, "to have any dealings with those people?"

"Do with me as you like," said Dora, "but take the child, and bless him for the sake of him that's gone!"

The farmer was very angry and said, "I see this is a trick got up betwixt you and that woman. Well, I will take the boy; but as for you, get you gone, and don't dare to see me any more!" So saying, he

took the boy, who cried and struggled. The wreath of flowers fell at Dora's feet, and she was left there, weeping silently. She had made herself homeless for the sake of William's child.

At evening, when the reapers left the field, Dora went to Mary's house and told her : " My uncle has taken the boy, but he says that he will never see me any more. Mary, let me live and work along with you."

Mary answered, " This must never be, for you to come to trouble on my account. And now I think he shall not have the boy ; for he will only teach him to be hard, and to despise his mother. Come with me ; I will have my boy again ; and if the farmer will not take you back, we will live here and work for the child together."

So the two women kissed each other and set out for the farm. The door was ajar ; they peeped in and saw the boy playing merrily with his grandfather by the fire. But when Mary and Dora came in the child

12813

cried out for his mother. And Mary said :

“I never came begging for myself, or William, or the child ; but now I come to ask you to take Dora back. And, sir, I want you to know that when William died he said he could never be sorry he had married me—I had been a good wife to him. But, sir, he said he had been wrong to cross his father’s will. ‘God bless him,’ William said, ‘and may he never know the troubles I have gone through.’ And after that he died. But now, sir, let me have my boy, for you will make him hard, and he will forget his father.”

There was a long silence ; then the old man burst into sobs, and cried, “I have been to blame. I have killed my dear son ; but I loved him. May God forgive me ! I have been to blame. Kiss me, my children !” Then they clung about his neck and kissed him, and he wept a long while over the child, and all his love came back a hundredfold, thinking of his son.

So they all lived henceforth happily at the farm together. As years went on, Mary married again, but Dora stayed her whole life long with the father and the child of William.

SWEET AND LOW

SWEET and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one,
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silvery moon :
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
sleep.



"Silver sails all out of the West."

THE PRINCESS

THERE was a Northern Prince in days of old ; he was blue-eyed and rosy, with long yellow ringlets like a girl's. And, as the custom then was, he had been betrothed, when only a child, to Ida, a neighbouring child Princess. As he became older, he heard how beautiful she was growing, and he wore her portrait against his heart. When the time came, the King, his father, sent ambassadors, with rich gifts, to fetch the Princess to be wedded ; but they returned without her. All they brought was an answer from her father, King Gama, which did not explain anything. He wrote that of course there was an agreement that Ida should marry the Prince, but she refused to wed at all. She had a will of her own, and preferred to live alone among her women.

At this the Prince's father was very angry,

and vowed that he would make war, and send a hundred thousand men to fetch her. But the Prince, who stood listening, with his two friends, Cyril and Florian, said, "Let me go myself. There must be some mistake. Let me find out why she refuses." And Florian said, "I have a sister at the foreign court, who is the Princess's dearest friend ; through her one might learn everything." But the old King roared out roughly, "No, you shall not go ! I will make war about this matter."

However, the Prince was determined to undertake the adventure ; and a few nights later he stole away, with his two friends, and journeyed in secret to the palace of King Gama. They found him a little shrivelled old man, not like a king at all. He feasted his guests, and talked and talked, three days. At last they had some sort of explanation from him. He said that his daughter Ida had begged of him a certain summer-palace on the frontier, and there she had fled with all her friends, to found a

University for maidens. And she hated the very sight of men, and would let no man approach the place, not even her three brothers. "As I think you have a right to see her if you can," said Gama, "I will give you letters to her. But, to speak the truth, you have no chance with her at all."

So the Prince and Cyril and Florian rode back northward, and found the palace, or college as it now was. They went into an inn, and had women's clothes purchased for them; and when dressed in these, they passed for very tall girls. They rode up to the palace portals, and asked to be enrolled as students. There were, it seemed, two chief tutors, Lady Blanche and Lady Psyche; this last was Florian's sister. The new pupils were put under her charge. They were given college gowns of lilac silk to wear; and next morning they were brought into the presence of the Princess.

She was the most lovely and stately creature imaginable, and gave the three new students a gracious welcome. She enquired

if they knew the Prince ; but when Cyril replied, " Your Highness, he worships the very thought of you ! " she reproved him severely. " We have nothing whatever to do with men," she said ; " none of us ever intends to marry. We are here for much greater purposes—to gain wisdom, to fill ourselves with knowledge, to make ourselves equal in everything with men, who have hitherto despised us."

And she dismissed them to the class of Lady Psyche. Lady Psyche was a beautiful young widow, with a little child of two. " My sister," whispered Florian. " Hush ! hush ! " said the Prince. And they sat there very demurely on their form among a crowd of girls, listening to Lady Psyche's learned lecture. It was all about the nobility of woman and the meanness of man ; and it was undoubtedly very clever. But when she had finished, and had beckoned up the stranger students to speak with them, she suddenly turned pale, and gasped, " My brother ! " " Well, my sister ? " " Oh,"

she said, "what are you doing here? and in this dress? And these—who are they? It is a plot to ruin all! Wretched boy! did you not see the inscription on the gate, 'LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH'?"

"Well, then Psyche," exclaimed Florian, "take my life if you wish, and write upon my tombstone, 'Here lies a brother, by a sister slain, all for the common good of womankind.'" And Cyril, who admired her greatly, said, "I should not mind being killed by the Lady Psyche." But the Prince explained who he was, and why he had come—to see his betrothed bride. The unhappy Lady Psyche was at a loss what to do, between her brother and her countrymen and her Head, the Princess Ida. She told them, "I am bound to inform my mistress; and if I do, you die." Then the three young men argued with her, and persuaded her; so that at last she promised not to betray them, on condition that they left the place as soon as possible.

But while she was kissing her brother, and shedding tears over memories of her old home, there came a voice, "I have brought a message here from Lady Blanche." And there at the door stood the Lady Blanche's daughter, Melissa.

"Ah, Melissa! you heard us," cried Psyche.

"Oh, forgive me; I could not help hearing," said Melissa. "But, dearest lady, do not fear me; do not suppose that I should give these gallant gentlemen to death."

"If your mother knew," said Psyche, "we should all be lost." For Lady Blanche was a stern and jealous woman. But the pretty Melissa promised that she would keep the dangerous secret; so Lady Psyche sent away her brother and his friends, bidding them keep their faces well hooded and speak as little as they could.

So they sat all muffled up in the splendid palace gardens, while the six hundred maidens played or rested round them. And thus the evening passed.

But in the morning they met Melissa, pale with want of sleep ; she had been weeping. “ Oh fly ! ” she cried, “ fly while yet you may ! My mother knows ! ” And she told them in broken sentences how her mother’s sharp eyes had guessed that they were men ; and Melissa could not deny it. And Lady Blanche, always jealous of Lady Psyche, who was loved the best, had seized this chance to ruin her. “ She has risen early,” sobbed Melissa, “ and is gone to inform the Princess ; yet, if you fly at once, you may still be saved.”

Cyril, however, believed that he could flatter even the haughty Lady Blanche, and, in spite of Melissa’s warning, off he went. He was a long while gone ; but at last returned more or less triumphant. He had promised Lady Blanche, in the Prince’s name, a palace and a college of her own, if she but held her peace ; and she had said she would consider her answer, and meanwhile say nothing to the Princess. “ Thus much have I gained,” said Cyril.

In the afternoon the Princess sent for the three new students to go riding with her. The Prince rode by her side, and she discoursed to him all the way on how much she meant to do for women. And he saw that at present she was as far as the sun out of his reach. They came at last, with a retinue of maidens, to a little tent set by a river, where food had been laid out ; and after supper they had music and singing. Even the Prince, disguising his manly voice, attempted a little song ; and nobody could help laughing at the curious sounds he made. But Cyril (who was always a wild youth) grown suddenly careless, began to trol some rough rude song, such as no girl would ever know. In vain did Florian and Psyche strive to stop him. The Princess bade him 'cease ; and the Prince, unable to restrain his fury, crying "Forbear, sir !" struck him on the breast.

"*Sir !*" At this dreadful word all the ladies shrieked and started up. "To horse ! Home !" commanded the Princess ; and

the whole throng fled helter-skelter. Not a creature was left in the pavilion save the three culprits—Cyril, Florian, and the Prince.

But then another shriek rang out. For the Princess, blind with rage, had missed her footing on the plank-bridge over the river, and was being rapidly whirled towards the cataract. The Prince, hampered as he was by woman's clothes, plunged instantly to the rescue, and with great difficulty succeeded in lifting his burden ashore. The maidens, rejoicing that their mistress was alive, bore her into the tent. The Prince went back on foot, and wandered miserably in the palace gardens.

There, when it was quite dark, he was joined by Florian. "The Princess has been holding a court of justice in the hall," said Florian; "I hid myself behind a pillar and heard all. Every girl was questioned whether she had known us; last of all Melissa. She would not answer anything. The Princess sent for Psyche, but she has fled, and so has Cyril. She sent for Psyche's child, to

cast it from the doors. She sent for Blanche, to accuse her face to face ; and I slipped out. What will you do now ? ”

Here two women proctors sprang upon them ; and after a prolonged hunt the Prince and Florian were captured.

They were brought before the Princess, where she sat high in the hall, with a hand-maid on either side combing out her long black hair, all damp from the river. Behind her stood eight huge ploughwomen—stronger than men, enormous creatures—and at her feet lay the lovely child of Psyche. Melissa was kneeling and weeping, but Lady Blanche was defending herself, and reproaching the Princess for having put Lady Psyche above her.

When she ceased, the Princess answered coldly, “ We dismiss you ; go ! As for this lost lamb,” and she pointed to the child, “ we take it to ourself.” Lady Blanche, smiling sourly, was about to drag Melissa away with her, when a woman letter-carrier, white with fear, rushed in, and fell before

the Princess with a handful of sealed despatches. The Princess, reading these papers, became scarlet with surprise and wrath. At last she flung them to the Prince, her prisoner, and he read them. One was from her father. He wrote: "Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince to see you, we did not know your ungracious law about death to every man that enters. We came after him in all haste, lest evil should befall, and fell into the hands of the King, his father, who has declared war upon us. He has an army besieging you, and holds me hostage for his son."

The second was from the Prince's father. "You have our son," it ran. "Do not dare to harm a hair of his head. Send him back safe to us, and carry out your contract to wed him. Unless you send him back this instant safe and sound, we will destroy your palace this very night."

Then the Prince stood up, and gave at last the letters which he had brought from Gama. He told the Lady Ida how he had

always loved her and dreamed of her, and wore her portrait at his heart. But she dashed down the letter unopened, and replied with bitter scorn, " You have done well and like a gentleman, and like a Prince ; you have our thanks for all ; and you look well, too, in your woman's dress. If all the gold in all the world were packed into your crown, I would not wed you. Were not my father a hostage, I would have slain you. Begone, I will not look upon you any more. Here, cast them out at the gates ! "

Then those eight mighty ploughwomen pushed the Prince and Florian down the steps, and shut the gate behind them. And they came in their girls' attire through the army that was camped outside, to the tent where the two Kings were awaiting Ida's answer.

The two Kings laughed until they cried ; the barons heaved and blew with amusement. The squires fairly rolled on the ground with laughter, for the Prince cut such a sorry figure, drenched with ooze and

torn with briars, and his girl's dress clinging about him. "Go!" roared his father at last, "make yourself a man to fight with men!" And he departed and clad himself in armour.



Cyril was there already, and Psyche, who lay weeping and wailing for her child, and would not be comforted.

In the morning came the three tall sons of Gama, with an army, to rescue their father. And the eldest, Arac, said to the Prince, "Your people have invaded our land. My father does not seem to wish for

war, and yet your father threatens war unless Ida wed with you ; and that she will never do. Will you forgo your claim ? ”

“ Why not decide it here among ourselves ? ” said the Prince, glancing round at his two friends. “ We are three to three, let us fight it out between us.”

“ Good ! ” said Arac. “ But she shall abide by the result of this fight. If you lose, you lose her ; if then you win, she must marry you.” And he wrote his sister a letter telling her of these things.

Princess Ida replied that she agreed to this decision. “ But I know, dear brother, you will not fail,” said she. “ Fight, and fight well. Still, do not take the Prince’s life ; he risked it for mine.”

So at the stroke of noon the lists were set in readiness, and the Prince and Cyril and Florian, with fifty Northern knights, closed in fierce fight with Arac and his brothers and fifty knights of the South.

The issue of the battle was doubtful for a while, for both sides bore themselves very

bravely. The Prince, glancing aside, saw the palace front all alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' faces ; and highest of all, like a



statue among them, stood Ida, nursing Psyche's baby in her arms, and waiting to see the triumph of her brothers. They were huge and mighty men, and the Prince's knights were falling back before them. Arac,

with a smile upon his great broad face, came charging full upon the Prince. Cyril and Florian thrust themselves in between ; but Arac rode them down. He and the Prince met sword to sword and horse to horse ; then Arac's blow fell, and his adversary's missed. The Prince dropped senseless from his horse.

A great cry ran through the lists. " The Prince is slain ! " and the old King, his father, ran to him, and unlaced his helmet, and threw himself in anguish upon the senseless body. But high upon the palace front stood Ida, with Psyche's child upon her arm, and she sang a song of victory : " Our enemies have fallen, have fallen ! "

" Come down, O maids ! " she cried to her girl-graduates, " come and help these wounded men, who have maintained our cause so nobly ! " She descended, carrying the babe, and flung her great bronze gates open, and came, a lovely, lordly creature, with her maidens, to where her wounded brothers lay. She kneeled and called them " dear

deliverers," and said, "You shall not lie in the tents, but in the palace, and be nursed and served by us for whom you fought."

But as she moved away, she passed the Prince, lying mute and pale, and the old King bending miserably over him. Her face changed, and she said, "He saved my life; my brother slew him for it." And the old King drew from the Prince's breast that portrait of Ida which he had always worn, and held it up before her.

Then at last the iron will of the Princess was broken, and her heart was melted; and setting down the child, she laid a finger on the Prince's brow. Presently she said, "O, sire, he lives; he is not dead. Oh, let me have him with my brothers here in the palace; we will tend him like one of them." While she spoke, Psyche came stealing up towards her little one; and Cyril, who lay wounded near, spoke bitter words to the Princess, and bade her restore the babe to the mother. "Or, if you will not give it," said he, "give it *me*, and I will give it

her." The Princess had no heart to deny him ; she kissed the little child and laid it in the hard mailed hands of Cyril. So in one moment Psyche held her darling babe again, and after a little while the Princess embraced and forgave her.

Then Ida bade the palace doors be opened to admit all wounded men, both friends and foes. And the six hundred maidens went to their different homes—all but the wisest and most skilful, who remained to nurse the knights. So their sacred palace was entered by men, and the college was turned into a hospital, and soldiers trampled in the garden ways, and everything was changed.

Lady Psyche and Melissa tended Florian and Cyril, who had been sorely wounded in the fight. But Ida herself sat by the bedside of the Prince, who either lay still in utter weakness, or, tossing wildly in fever, would push away her gentle hand. And believing he would surely die, and repenting of her hard-heartedness, the Princess came at last to love him.

At last one evening he woke from a long sleep ; the fever had passed away, but he was scarcely alive for weakness. And he saw the Princess sitting beside him, and felt her tears upon his hand. Then he whispered, "Are you some sweet dream, or Ida, whom I used to know ? If you are a dream, stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die."

Then she stooped and kissed him ; and he knew that she was real and no dream, and that she loved him. After this he began to recover, for he now had something to live for ; and he regained strength and health from that moment.

"I have been very foolish," said the Princess, by-and-by. "I am not fit for anyone to care for."

"Dear," said the Prince, "you must not blame yourself too much. Lay your sweet hands in mine, and trust to me."

THE BROOK

LAURENCE AYLMER was seated on a stile in a field-path, thinking of the days of his youth. The meadow brook was running a few yards from him ; it seemed to sing a little song as it rippled in the sunshine.

“ I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorpes, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last, by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.”

“Here by this brook we parted, my brother Edmund and I,” said Laurence Aylmer. “I went to the East, where I have been so many years, and he, poor lad, went travelling in Italy, and died there. There is Darnley bridge; I see there is more ivy on it; there is the river; and there is Philip’s farm, where brook and river meet. How that brook does sing!”

“I chatter over stony ways,
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret,
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever.”

“Old Philip, the farmer,” continued Laur-

ence Aylmer, "he chattered more than any brook; he never stopped his chattering. But his one child, darling Katie Willows—what a charming girl she was, with her bashful azure eyes and chestnut hair! I remember seeing that sweet daughter of the meadows coming towards me from beyond the brook, waist-deep in meadow-sweet." And the brook sang on:

"I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout,
And here and there a grayling;

And here and there a foamy flake
Upon me as I travel,
With many a silvery waterbreak
Above the golden gravel;

And draw them all along, and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever."

"I remember," Laurence Aylmer went on

talking to himself, "I remember I did a good turn that day to pretty Katie Willows. She and her cousin James Willows had quarrelled, and they wanted to make it up again, but could not, because old Philip was always chattering, so that James could not get a minute's word with Katie. So, while we spoke, we saw James coming through the field ; and oh, what I suffered for your sake, sweet Katie ! For I went and called old Philip out to show me the farm, which I had seen a hundred times before. And he came very willingly ; and he talked, and talked, and talked. He praised his land, his horses, his machines ; he praised his ploughs and cows, and hogs and dogs, and hens and geese, and guinea-fowl. He showed me all his puppies and his pigeons. But it was worth while ; for when in the end I escaped, I found Katie looking happy again ; she and James had at last had time to make it up."

"I steal by lawns and grassy plots ;

I slide by hazel covers ;

I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance
Among my skimming swallows ;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows. . . .

And out again I curve, and flow
To join the brimming river :
For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever."

"Yes, men may come and go," mused Laurence Aylmer, "and all these folk are gone ; all gone. Edmund is dead, and talkative old Philip is dead, and James and Katie are far away in Australia. All are gone," and he sighed and was silent.

Suddenly, looking up, he saw a maiden waiting to cross the stile ; a girl with bashful azure eyes and chestnut hair, the very image of Katie Willows.

"Are you from the farm ? " he asked her in surprise. "What do they call you ? "

“Katie Willows,” she replied.

“No ! ” cried Laurence Aylmer ; “ why, you seem to be the ghost of one who bore



your name, in these very meadows, twenty years ago.”

“ Have you not heard ? ” said Katie. “ We came back and bought the farm, my mother’s old home. Am I so like her ? Sir, did you

know her in the dear old days she loves to talk of? You will be very welcome. Oh, come in ! ”

So Laurence Aylmer found his friends again.

THE FALCON

THE beautiful Lady Giovanna and the Count Federigo were neighbours. But while she was rich, dwelling in her tall castle, with many servants and retainers, he was a poor man, living in a small cottage with his old peasant nurse Elisabetta. He had once been wealthier ; but he continued to spend all that he had in sending costly presents to the Lady Giovanna. She did not wish to receive them ; yet she dared not distress him by returning them. And now he was so poor that there was hardly bite or sup in the cottage. The only thing which Count Federigo loved too dearly to part with was his large and splendid falcon. And indeed he was now so beggared that his falcon had to hunt a dinner for him when he had none.

The Lady Giovanna was a widow with one child, her boy Florio, and he was very

ill. He seemed to be daily fading away before her eyes. And whenever she asked him, "What can I do to make you well?" he had only one answer to give her—"Get



me Count Federigo's falcon for my own," he implored, "and then I shall get well at once."

This put poor Lady Giovanna into dreadful difficulty. For how could she ask Count

Federigo for the one and only precious thing remaining to him—his pride and delight, his constant companion—the falcon which was known as the best in all the land? Not only so, but there was a feud between his family and hers; his grandfather had been stabbed in a quarrel by the grandfather of Lady Giovanna, and the quarrel had never been healed. So she said to herself in despair, again and again, “Even to save my darling child, how can I ask Count Federigo for his falcon?”

At last, however, one morning early, the Lady Giovanna arrived at the cottage, and said very sweetly to Federigo, “Count, I am come to breakfast with you!” The Count consulted hastily with his old servant Elisabetta. “Alas!” said she, “what can we place upon the table? Nothing in the house but a plate of dried prunes!” Count Federigo whispered in her ear, and then returned to his guest. The lady had no notion of his extreme poverty until she entered the cottage; and when she perceived that he had

beggared himself to make her costly presents, she was at once pained and pleased. For indeed she returned his love ; although, because of the hatred her family, and especially her brother, bore him, she dared not let this be known.

He sat and entertained her with courtly conversation, and with songs to the guitar ; it was the most peaceful and happy time that ever they had spent together. Presently the old servant brought in the breakfast, a flask of poor wine, a plate of stewed prunes, a bowl of lettuces, and a bird on a dish.

“ This is a fine fowl, my lady,” said she, “ but we had not much time in which to cook it ; I hope it is not underdone.”

Lady Giovanna only played with her food ; it was plain that she had no heart for eating. She was trying to make up her mind to ask the boon for which she had come ; and for a long while she had not the courage. However, she told Count Federigo how ill her little boy was.

“ He seemed well enough,” replied the

Count, "last time he came to see me hawking."

"Oh, yes," said Lady Giovanna; "and once you let him fly your falcon."

"Yes," said the Count; "how pleased he was! The gallant boy and the noble bird were well matched."

"What do you value her at?" asked Lady Giovanna, with a beating heart.

"My bird! She is past all value!" exclaimed Federigo. "I would never part with her for money."

"My lord," said she, "I have a present to return to you, and a boon to ask of you." And she laid upon the table the magnificent diamond necklace, the last gift which he had sent her. "I cannot keep these diamonds, for what I am going to ask of you is of more value than all the jewels upon earth. Yet my love for my dying boy moves me to ask it of you."

"Ask me," said the Count; "it shall be yours." She hesitated, and then went on. "You know sick children have such strange

fancies and longings ; and often they will die if they are denied their wish. If you had children of your own, you would understand my suffering. My boy is gradually growing weaker every day, and the one thing he begs for continually—is—your falcon ! ”

“ My falcon ! ” he exclaimed. “ Alas ! I cannot.”

“ Cannot ! ” said the poor mother, grievously disappointed. “ I feared as much. It was too great a gift to ask. . . . How shall I tell him ? . . . My lord, I thank you for your entertainment.” And dropping a stately curtsy, she was passing out with bowed head when Count Federigo caught her hand.

“ Dear lady,” he cried with a sorrowful voice, “ had you but asked this of me one little hour ago, the falcon should have been yours. But when you chose to honour me with your company here in my poor cottage, I placed before you the most precious thing I had. There was no other food to offer

you. I killed my bird to serve you for your breakfast ! ”

“ Oh, Federigo, Federigo ! ” said the lady, and she flung herself at his feet ; “ how truly you have loved me ; and, in spite of ten thousand brothers, how I love you, Federigo ! ”

“ The dying of my bird has helped me more than his living,” said Federigo, as he lifted Giovanna to his breast. “ Come, dear, we two together will help to heal your son ; and I feel sure that we shall do it.” And these two happy people went back to comfort the sick child as best they might.

THE MAY QUEEN

Part I

YOU must wake and call me early, call
me early, mother dear ;

To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all
the glad New Year ;

Of all the glad New Year, mother, the
maddest, merriest day ;

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

There's many a black, black eye, they say,
but none so bright as mine ;

There's Margaret and Mary, there's Kate and
Caroline :

But none so fair as little Alice in all the
land, they say,

So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother, that I
shall never wake,

If you do not call me loud when the day
begins to break :

But I must gather knots of flowers, and
buds and garlands gay,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think ye
should I see,
But Robin leaning on the bridge beneath the
hazel-tree ?
He thought of that sharp look, mother, I
gave him yesterday—
But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother, for I
was all in white,
And I ran by him without speaking, like a
flash of light.
They call me cruel-hearted, but I care not
what they say,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow to
the green,
And you'll be there, too, mother, to see me
made the Queen ;



For the shepherd lads on every side 'ill come
from far away,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has wov'n
its wavy bowers,
And by the meadow-trenches blow the faint
sweet cuckoo-flowers ;
And the wild marsh-marigold shines like fire
in swamps and hollows grey,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

The night winds come and go, mother, upon
the meadow grass,
And the happy stars above them seem to
brighten as they pass ;
There will not be a drop of rain the whole
of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh and green
and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are over
all the hill,

THE MAY QUEEN

61

And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill merrily
glance and play,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

So you must wake and call me early, call me
early, mother dear ;
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of all
the glad New Year ;
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the maddest,
merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

Part II

That is what Alice said to her mother
on May-Eve. But on New Year's Eve
she had a different tale to tell. For she
lay a-dying slowly in her little room ;
and she knew that the New Year's Day
would be the last she would ever look
upon.

To-night I saw the sun set : he set and left
behind

The good old Year, the dear old time, and
all my peace of mind ;

And the New Year's coming up, mother, but
I shall never see

The blossom on the blackthorn, the leaf upon
the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers : we
had a merry day :

Beneath the hawthorn on the green they
made me Queen of May ;

And we danced about the Maypole and in
the hazel copse,

Till Charles's Wain came out above the tall
white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills : the
frost is on the pane ;

I only wish to live till the snowdrops come
again ;

I wish the snow would melt and the sun
come out on high :

I long to see a flower so before the day I
die.

.

When the flowers come again, mother, be-
neath the waning light,

You'll never see me more in the long gray
field at night ;

When from the dry dark wold the summer
airs blow cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass and
the bulrush in the pool. . . .

I have been wild and wayward, but you'll
forgive me now ;

You'll kiss me, my own mother, and forgive
me ere I go ;

Nay, nay, you must not fret for me, nor let
your grief be wild,

You must not fret for me, mother, you have
another child. . . .

She'll find my garden tools upon the granary
floor ;

Let her take 'em ; they are hers ; I shall
never garden more :

But tell her, when I'm gone, to train the
rosebush that I set

Above the parlour window, and the pot of
mignonette.

.

O look ! the sun begins to rise, the heavens
are in a glow ;

He shines upon a hundred fields, and all of
them I know ;

And there I move no longer now, and there
his light may shine—

Wild flowers in the valley for other hands
than mine.

THE DAY DREAM

THE palace was under a spell of enchantment. Everybody in it was fast asleep : the barons round the banquet-table ; the king in his chair of state ; all the servants, just as they had fallen asleep suddenly at their different employments. The parrot in its cage, the peacock on the terrace, even the swallows in the eaves, were sound asleep. And the beautiful Princess, the king's dear only daughter, lay slumbering in her quiet room, with her jet-black hair falling across the purple coverlet, and her diamonds glistening against the gold-fringed pillow.

All round the palace rose a thick matted hedge of thorns, ivies, vines and woodbines ; it was like a high wall of green over which the topmost palace spire could only just be seen. And many men had tried to pass through the hedge, but none had ever succeeded. They had been caught in the thorns

and perished miserably ; for the spell had been cast for a thousand years, and, until the time was up, no one could hope to find the palace.

But at last one day there came a fairy prince, with joyful eyes and light feet, who had travelled far from other lands. He saw the bones of the other adventurers lying white among the thorns ; but he thought of the proverb, " The many fail, the one succeeds." And, hardly knowing how, he broke into the hedge, and the thorns gave way before him ; and he entered the enchanted palace. A strange music led him onward to the quiet chamber where the perfect form of the Princess lay slumbering so sweetly. " If thy tresses be so dark," he murmured, " how dark those hidden eyes must be ! " And he stooped upon his knee and kissed her.

Then, with that kiss, the spell snapped, and there arose a noise of striking clocks, and running feet, and slamming doors, and barking dogs, and crowing cocks. The foun-



“A strange music led him onward to the quiet chamber where the . . . Princess lay slumbering.”

tain in the garden sprang up sixty feet, the banner flew, all the people in the palace awoke and went on with whatever they had been doing a thousand years ago. Last of all the king awoke and yawned, and said, "My lords, we must have been asleep. My beard has grown into my lap!" Yet the barons declared they had only had a little after-dinner nap.

But the Princess went away with the Prince to seek his father's court; and they were both too glad to wonder at anything. He gave her his arm to lean on, and told her how he loved her; and across the hills, and far away beyond their utmost purple rim, and deep into the dying day, the happy Princess followed him.



THE FORESTERS

IN the days when Richard the Lion-Heart, King of England, was taken a prisoner by his enemies on his way home from the Crusades, the days when his brother, Prince John, ruled England very badly in his stead, and desired to be king himself, there was a fair maid named Marian. She was the daughter of Sir Richard Lea, and she was deeply loved by Robert, Earl of Huntingdon, who was a loyal subject of King Richard, and hated the very hateful John.

Now Sir Richard Lea's only son, Marian's brother Walter, was a prisoner like the

Lion-Heart, having been captured by the Moors on his way back from the Holy Land ; and a great sum was needed for his ransom—two thousand marks in gold. Sir Richard had not so much money in the world, but he borrowed it from the Abbot of York, on this condition, that if it were not returned within a year, the Abbot should take Sir Richard's lands instead. And the gold had been sent out ; but there was no news of Walter.

Now Sir Richard was at his wits' end how to pay back this two thousand marks, and so keep his estates. The Sheriff of Nottingham, an evil man and a friend of Prince John, offered to pay it, if only fair Maid Marian would listen to his courting of her. But Marian replied that she had made a vow to wed with no man till King Richard should come back. And indeed she secretly returned the love of the brave Lord Robert of Huntingdon.

Lord Robert was much too poor to help Sir Richard Lea with money ; and in a very

short while he was unable to help him in any other way. For the Sheriff of Nottingham, finding that Maid Marian and the Earl were betrothed to each other, persuaded Prince John to banish and outlaw this noble Earl of Huntingdon and to seize all his goods and estates, on some excuse of breaking the forest laws. He was driven out of his earldom, and escaped to the Forest of Sherwood, with his favourite servants, Much, Will Scarlet, and Little John. And there, cut off from his friends, and from his true love Marian, Robin Hood, as he now called himself, reigned king of an outlaw band in the wild greenwood.

When he had been there about a year, word was brought to him that Marian, having been insolently treated by John, had fled away with her father, none knew whither. "I would that I could see her, if only for one moment," mused Robin Hood to himself. "I should feel the happier for it through all the rest of the year." And while he was thus dreaming, he perceived

three strangers drawing near, and presently recognised them : Prince John, the Sheriff of Nottingham, and a foreign soldier. Robin's bowmen were scattered away through the forest, and he was in danger of being captured. He knocked hastily at the door of an old woman's hut near by. Men called her the Witch of Sherwood ; but she and Robin Hood were excellent friends.

“ Quick, good mother, quick ! ” said he. “ My foes are after me. I have mislaid my bugle-horn that calls my men together. Quick, let me borrow thy petticoat and gown and coif ! ”

“ Ay, ay, take them,” said she, “ and take a poor old woman's blessing with them.” And she drew him into the hut.

In a few moments Prince John and his friends, who thought they had seen a man go in there, came hammering at the door. A tall old woman bade them enter ; and, when they asked for food, she set some milk and black bread before them.

“ Faugh ! what stuff ! ” said Prince John,

as he tasted the milk ; “ and as for this bread, it is mere stone. Old hag, how canst thou eat this with thy one tooth ? ” And he decided to find his way back to Nottingham, rather than waste any more time searching for Robin Hood. So the Sheriff



offered the old woman a silver penny to put them in the right way. While they were going along with the pretended old witch, and shooting very badly with their bows at any deer they chanced to see, the disguised Robin let fly an arrow with such skill, and so successfully, that they recognised him at once as the master archer, Robin Hood. They clutched at his gown,

which fell off; and all three of them immediately attacked him.

But friends were at hand to his rescue. First arrived Little John. "What!" he exclaimed, "three setting upon one!" And he drew his sword. Next appeared old Sir Richard Lea. "I will not endure to see three against two," said he; and he also drew. Then Maid Marian, in the armour of a Red-Cross knight, came swiftly through the trees; but her father bade her retire. Last of all, as the three villains, beaten off, made a hasty departure, Friar Tuck, the jolly monk who followed Robin Hood, arrived—a little late—with his trusty quarter-staff.

Sir Richard Lea was wounded. "But I am sorry," said he, "to have been fighting with the Sheriff of Nottingham; for, truly, Robin, I shall have to take him for a son-in-law, to save my lands and estates. I cannot have my Marian wed an outlaw." And indeed the old knight had made his daughter wear this manly garb, to pass her

off as his lost son Walter, lest Robin should know who she was. But Robin and Marian could not long be hidden from each other by any disguise, however strange.

Robin, nevertheless, argued in vain, and besought in vain, that Marian should be his bride and share his fortunes. "I will not marry you till my father consents," said she, "and I will not marry at all until King Richard be home again. I will dwell here in the forest as your friend; but that is all." And she went to nurse her wounded father.

Robin threw himself down upon a mossy bank beneath the trees. "I am very weary," said he, "as tired as though a fairy spell were on me. And I think it must be so; for things will not come right between me and Marian. I cannot make her change her mind. . . . My men talk about fairies having formerly been seen in this glade. I suppose we must have frightened them away. But I certainly believe a spell is on me." And he fell fast asleep.

Then all the fairies came trooping through the wood and skipping out of hollow trunks and swinging in the branches. And they surrounded their Queen Titania, and said, "Everything is being crushed and trampled by these men-folk who have come here. Take us far away, O Queen!"

"Yes," said Titania, "we must leave our merry Sherwood, and seek some land where we can dance without being disturbed. But first, let me bid farewell to this moody man, for whom I am somewhat sorry." And the dainty, delicate sprite bent over the sleeping outlaw and whispered, "You and your Marian love each other truly; you shall wed each other and be happy!" And, as he half awoke, the fairies took their flight and were never seen there more.

Time passed on. Sir Richard Lea was too weak to leave the shelter of Sherwood, and Maid Marian was very happy, reigning as Forest Queen among the archer band. And on a certain day Robin Hood sent messengers into York, bidding the Abbot

bring to him in Sherwood the bond that he had had from Sir Richard.

“What do you mean to do with it?” Marian asked him.

“You will see,” said Robin Hood mysteriously. And he sent his men to watch the forest ways, to see if the Abbot were at hand. Presently a tall and stalwart knight came by: it was King Richard the Lion-Heart, but Robin did not know him in the least. Robin invited him to sit and sup, for he liked the frankness and boldness of the stranger.

“All very well,” exclaimed Friar Tuck; “but this is our forest law, that he who dines with us must fight if he cannot pay. Come, bring out the quarterstuffs!”

“I cannot play at quarterstaff,” said the unknown knight; “however, I can try.” In a few moments, however, he yielded before the sturdy strokes of Friar Tuck, and said, “Let me buffet thee with bare fists instead!” And, to the surprise of all the assembled foresters and peasants, down

went the valourous Friar Tuck. The stranger could indeed strike very hard.

Much then offered to buffet with him, and was knocked down at the first blow ; lastly, Robin Hood himself, at a single stroke, fell back from before the mighty arm of this strong mysterious man.

At this moment the Abbot and his justiciary or lawyer arrived, very much annoyed at having been summoned. "Where is Sir Richard Lea ?" enquired the Abbot angrily. "You sent word that he would meet us here and pay down the two thousand marks he owes me."

"He is wounded," replied Robin ; "he cannot come at present ; but give me the bond and I will pay the money for him." And he handed two bags to the Abbot. They contained the two thousand marks, to which he had helped himself from wealthy travellers who had passed by that way.

"Yes ; but then there is four hundred marks for interest," observed the justiciary.

“Very well, there it is,” said Robin, and he handed him another bag.

“I have made a mistake; I meant five hundred marks,” said the justiciary.

“Here is another hundred,” answered Robin.

“Yes,” continued the lawyer; “but it says in the bond that this money is to be rendered to the Abbot, in York, at noonday the last day of this month. And here you are paying it in Sherwood, an hour after noonday. The bond is broken. We shall take Sir Richard’s lands.”

Then Robin Hood was very wrathful; but while he was threatening them with all sorts of vengeance, the Abbot muttered that Prince John and the Sheriff knew what was afoot. And in another moment Prince John and a host of spearmen were reported close at hand.

Robin Hood and his merry men concealed themselves in the bushes; nobody was left in sight save the Abbot and the lawyer, Maid Marian, in her forest green,

and her old father, who had just been brought down in a litter to settle his affair with the hard and covetous Abbot.

The Sheriff of Nottingham suddenly appeared, and once more demanded that Marian should wed him ; but, in spite of her father's pleading, she refused. " Carry her away," said Prince John ; " leave the old man to his fate ; why do we waste time talking ? " But Marian fitted an arrow to her bow, and dared any man to come near her. Prince John bade his spearmen advance and seize her, when the unknown knight, stepping out of the undergrowth, commanded them to retreat.

" I am Richard the King ! " said he.

" Richard is dead in prison ! " cried Prince John. " Down with this traitor who has taken his name ! Fall upon him ! "

But as Richard, single-handed, was surrounded by an overwhelming number of his enemies, the blowing of a horn was heard, and Robin, with all his archers, rushed upon the scene and drove off the

attackers, and rescued the noble Lion-Heart. Prince John fled ; the Sheriff was made prisoner ; and the Abbot and lawyer were forced to restore their ill-gotten gains ; for the man who had been sent to take young Walter's ransom now returned with the gold, saying that he had failed to find the youth.

“ That may well be,” said Richard, “ since I have brought him back with me. Come hither, Walter ! ” And a bronzed young man stepped out from behind a great oak tree.

“ Here is your son, old knight,” exclaimed King Richard ; “ and now, as I am told fair Marian will wed with no man until I return, let her make ready at once for her bridal. For when we have dined upon the King's venison, for which I am exceeding hungry, Friar Tuck shall join in wedlock the hands of Earl Robin and Maid Marian.”

LADY CLARE

IT was on a summer's day, in the time when lilies grow, and clouds sail high in air, that Lord Ronald brought a lily-white doe to give Lady Clare, his cousin. Now he and she were not only cousins, but lovers long betrothed ; and the very next morning they were to be married. So they parted very lovingly.

The heart of Lady Clare was glad ; for she thought, " He does not love me for my rank or for my lands ; but only for myself alone." And while she still was smiling to herself, in came old Alice, her nurse, saying, " Who was this that came and went ? "

" It was my cousin," said Lady Clare, " my husband that shall be to-morrow."

" God be thanked," said Alice the nurse, " that all is coming round so right. For indeed Lord Ronald is the heir of your

lands. You are not Lady Clare at all. You are my daughter."

"Are you out of your mind, my nurse, that you speak so wildly?" cried the girl.

"Nay," said the old nurse, "I speak the truth: you are my child. The Earl's daughter died in my arms, a baby; and I put my own sweet baby in her stead."

"Oh, mother," she said, "if this be true, you have done very ill, to keep the best man under the sun from his rightful dues so many years."

"It does not matter now," said Alice, "you must keep this always secret. All that is yours will be Lord Ronald's, when once you are man and wife. Only keep fast the secret."

"Not so," Lady Clare replied, "but I will find out if there be any faith in the man; for he shall have his right, though I should die for it."

Then the poor old woman threw herself upon Lady Clare, and cried, "Alas! my

child, if I sinned, it was for your sake. Will you not give me one kiss ? ”

The lady took her in her arms. “ Oh, mother, mother, mother ! ” she said, “ it seems so strange ! Yet, here’s a kiss for you, my mother dear ; and lay your hand upon my head, and bless me, mother, before I go.” And the old nurse did so.

Then the girl put on a russet gown, such as peasants wear. She was no longer Lady Clare, but a poor and simple maid. She went by dale and she went by down, with a single rose in her hair. And the lily-white doe Lord Ronald had brought leaped up and laid her head in the maiden’s hand, and so went all the way with her.

At last they reached Lord Ronald’s castle, and he spied them from the tower, and stepped down in haste to meet them. “ Oh, Lady Clare,” said he, “ why do you shame yourself in this way, to come dressed like a village maid, you that are the flower of all the earth ? ”

“ If I come dressed as a village maid,” said

she, "it is but as I should appear. For I am a beggar born, and not the Lady Clare at all."

"Your riddle is too hard for me," Lord Ronald answered. "Play me no tricks, I beg of you, for I am yours both in word and deed."

Then Lady Clare stood up proudly—Oh, how proudly!—and her heart did not fail within her at the tale she had to tell. She looked straight into Lord Ronald's eyes, and told him all her nurse had said.

Did she expect him to turn away from her? She hardly knew herself. But Lord Ronald's faith stood firm. He was not shocked, or surprised, or indignant. He laughed a laugh of merry scorn, and took her in his arms, and kissed her.

"If this be so," said he, "if you are not the rightful heiress, and I am the man who should own your whole possessions—why, that is easily set right. We two will be wedded to-morrow morning, and so you shall still be Lady Clare!" And with another kiss he ended the matter.

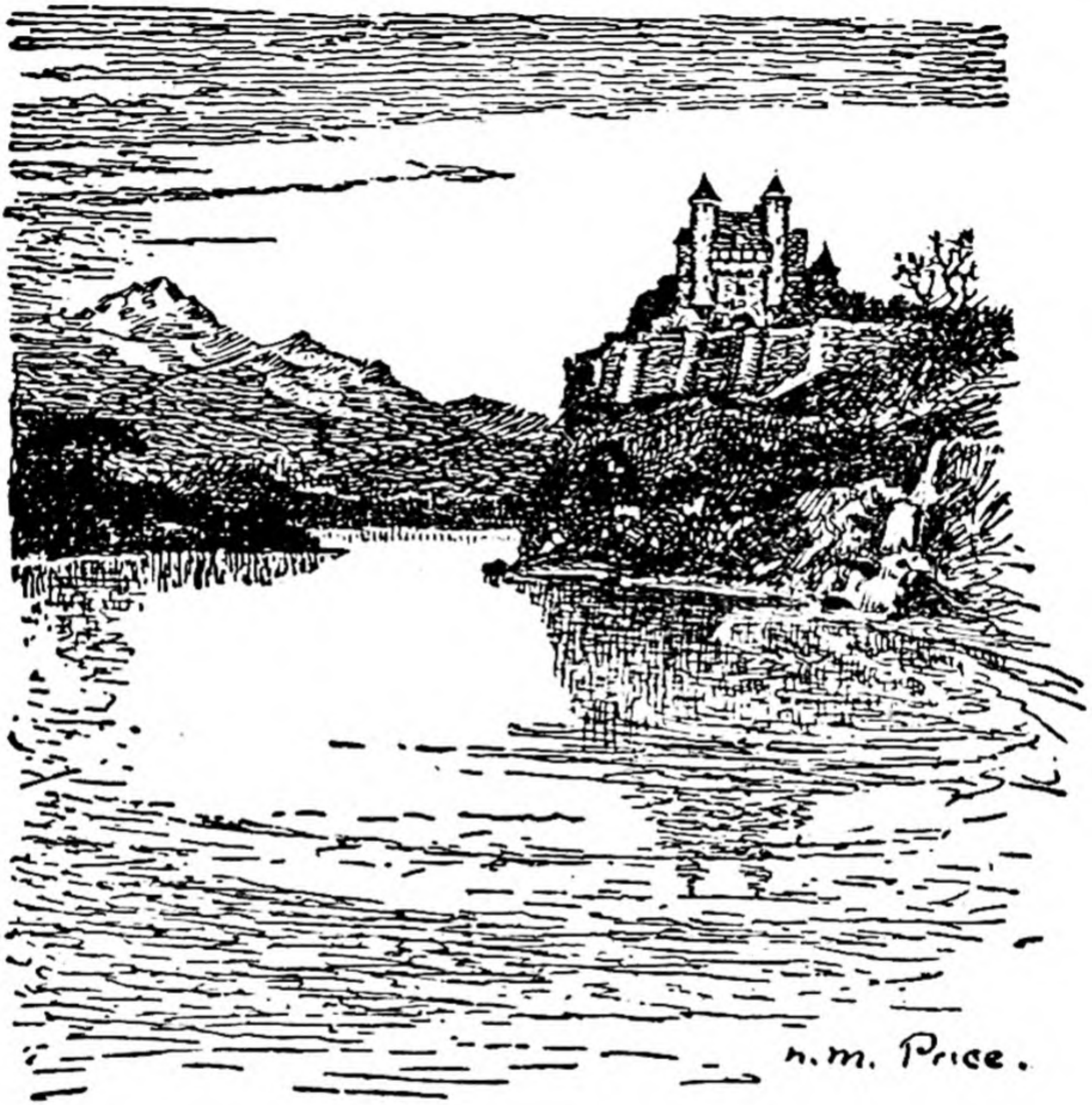
ECHOES

THE splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story ;
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying ;
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O hark, O hear ! How thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going !
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing
ing !
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :

Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.



Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

THE BEGGAR-MAID

(In an old song it is said that the beggar-maid's name was Penelophon.)

HER arms across her breast she laid ;
She was more fair than words can say ;
Barefooted came the beggar-maid
Before the King Cophetua.

In robe and crown the King stept down
To meet and greet her on her way ;
“ It is no wonder,” said the lords ;
“ She is more beautiful than day.”

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen :
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been :
Cophetua swore a royal oath,
“ This beggar-maid shall be my queen ! ”

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

THERE was a sweet and gentle country maiden hundreds of years ago, who was wooed by a landscape painter. They were married at the village church, and the bride bade farewell to her father and mother, and set out with her husband for his home. "I am too poor to give you a wedding present," he told her, "but I love you more than my life, and love will make our simple cottage pleasant."

So they journeyed hand in hand through the summer woodland. At first the bridegroom was sunk in deep thought and spoke little, but at last he said to his wife, "Let us see these handsome houses where the wealthy nobles dwell"; and, talking to her lovingly, he led her through wide green parks with glorious oaks and chestnuts, and past ancient homes of lord and lady, surrounded by beautiful gardens.

Presently they came through a stately gateway to a more lordly mansion than any that they had seen before. Her husband led her



up the steps : a crowd of gaily-dressed servants and retainers were bowing before him at the door. He passed with a firm tread

from one great hall to another, and the servants answered at his call. The little bride was lost in wonder, when all at once her husband turned and told her proudly and kindly, "All of this is mine and thine!"

For he was no poor landscape-painter, but Cecil, the Lord of Burleigh; and this was his wealthy house.

The timid village maid flushed rosy-red, and then turned deathly-white. He clasped her close like a lover, and tried to cheer her with loving words. But this was not the home that she had set her simple heart upon; and to tell the truth, she did not like it.

She did her best to fit herself for the duties of her strange new rank. She behaved as a noble, gentle lady, and the people loved her much; but a trouble weighed her down continually, the burden of an honour to which she was not born. And as she grew weaker and fainter year by year, she murmured to herself, "Oh, that he were once more that landscape-painter who

won my heart at first ! ” Then came one dreary day when she lay dead, in her magnificent house, Burleigh House, by Stamford town. And the Lord of Burleigh, looking upon her peaceful face, understood at last what she had suffered, and how she had longed for peaceful poverty instead of pride and splendour.

“ Bring the dress,” he said, “ and put it on her, the dress she wore the day I wedded her.” Then they clothed her in the little simple country wedding-gown that she had worn in the village church, and so bore her softly to her rest.

WHAT DOES LITTLE BIRDIE SAY ?

WHAT does little Birdie say,
In her nest at peep of day ?
Let me fly, says little Birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger :
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little Baby say,
In her bed at peep of day ?
Baby says, like little Birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger :
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby, too, shall fly away.



n. m. Price.

